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TAGS: MOPS, PARM
SUBJECT: BW -- SOVIET REACTION TO SECRETARY HAIG'S CHARGE
- ON MYCOTOXINS

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1. SUMMARY: TASS HAS CALLED SECRETARY HAIG'S CHARGE THAT THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES ARE USING "CHEMICAL WEAPONS" IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN A "MONSTROUS, SLANDEROUS STATEMENT." THE TASS CRITICISM FAILS TO MENTION THAT THE SUBSTANCES INVOLVED ARE TOXINS, AND HENCE BANNED UNDER THE 1975 BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION. INSTEAD, TASS TALKS ONLY OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS -- IT CRITICIZES U.S. PRODUCTION AND PAST USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS, AND ASSERTS THAT U.S.-INITIATED PREPARATIONS FOR A CHEMICAL WAR ARE THE "REAL THREAT." END SUMMARY.
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2. TASS ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICE SEPTEMBER 13 ISSUED A SHARP ATTACK ON THE SECRETARY'S CHARGE THAT THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES HAVE BEEN USING MYCOTOXINS IN LAOS, KAMPUCHEA, AND AFGHANISTAN. PRAVDA SEPTEMBER 14 MAKES NO MENTION OF THE SECRETARY'S BERLIN SPEECH OR OF THE TASS REBUTTAL OF THE MYCOTOXIN CHARGE.

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3. THE MAIN POINTS OF THE TASS REPORT ARE:
-- IN BERLIN SECRETARY HAIG MADE A "MONSTROUS, SLANDEROUS STATEMENT" THAT THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES "PRESUMABLY USED CHEMICAL WEAPONS" IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN.
-- NO STATE IN HISTORY HAS USED CHEMICAL WEAPONS AS WIDELY AS THE U.S. THE U.S. HAS 300,000 TONS OF LETHAL POISONOUS SUBSTANCES AND IS BUILDING A NEW CW PLANT.
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-- IN 1976 ON SOVIET INITIATIVE U.S.-SOVIET TALKS ON THE PROHIBITION OF CW BEGAN, SO THE SECRETARY'S ACCUSATION THAT THE USSR VIOLATED THE 1925 GENEVA PROTOCOL "FULLY DISTORTS FACTS, TO PUT IT MILDLY." U.S. MILITARIST POLICY, AND WASHINGTON-INITAITED PREPARATIONS FOR A CHEMICAL WAR, ARE THE "REAL THREAT."

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4. COMMENT: TASS FAILS TO MENTION THAT THE SUBSTANCES AT ISSUE ARE TOXINS, AND HENCE ARE BANNED BY THE BW CONVENTION. INSTEAD, TASS PICKS UP ON THE SECRETARY'S REFERENCE TO THEM AS "LETHAL CHEMICAL WEAPONS," AND ASSOCIATES THEM ONLY WITH CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND BY IMPLICATION WITH THE ONGOING CW NEGOTIATIONS. THE SOVIETS PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK TO BLUR THIS DISTINCTION.

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5. KABUL MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
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